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ABSTRACT

An examination is presented of costs, measured in time and dollars, resulting from the maintenance of a selective California state documents collection. A discussion of previous research dealing with government documents collections is followed by a brief description of the California state documents depository program. Then the state documents program and associated maintenance activities at the library of California State University, Northridge, are outlined. Personnel and cataloging costs are itemized to arrive at a total annual cost for the program. Overhead items, while considered, are not included in the total. (Author/LS)

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Cost Analysis of A Selective (California) State Documents Depository

by

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March 29, 1976

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Introduction

The value of state government publications is apparent from an examination of the extensive range of subjects dealt with in this body of primary source material. State publications, like those of the federal and local governments, provide a rich and oftentimes exhaustive source of information on a diversity of contemporary and historical topics. The usefulness of state publications for reference purposes is acknowledged in the library literature. Sims (1966) notes that reliance on state publications as information sources has been promulgated by 1) increasing state functions and activities which have generated the need for knowledge of the past and present, 2) research on state legislative and administrative activities, and 3) increasing reliance on original source documents for research purposes.[1]

In making state publications available to its patrons, an information center, characteristically a larger public or college or university library, incurs in-house costs that may overshadow perhaps the most enticing feature of state publications, namely that they are free or available at a minimal price.

Library policy associated with processing state publications for effective use varies; variation is dependent upon the terms of receipt, the library's intellectual and academic functions, and patron need. Matters of policy re-

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garding patron provision of state publications is touched upon briefly in the discussion to follow. The purpose of this paper however is to examine the costs, measured in time and dollars, resulting from the maintenance of a state publications collection. Specifically, the costs incurred in the receipt and processing of state publications by a university library designated as a selective state documents depository are examined.

This study proceeds by first examining previous research dealing with government documents collections. Following this, the California state documents depository program is briefly described. Next, the state documents collection at the study site, the library at California State University, Northridge, and the activities associated with its maintenance are described. Having thus oriented the reader to the responsibilities associated with the collection, the costs incurred as a result of the fulfillment of these duties are examined.

Previous Research

A review of the library and education literature of the past two decades reveals the minimal attention given to studies of virtually all aspects of library documents collections. Due to their predominance and widespread distribution, federal documents have been the subject of the majority of these studies. Articles on state publications, limited in number, have typically indicated the availability of

and described bibliographical guides to state publications.[2] References to the use of documents collections are scanty.[3] Direct attention to the costs of maintaining a documents collection are virtually nonexistent. Ripa (1965) comments on some general cost aspects of a federal documents depository. She notes,

> Do not entertain the illusion that depository documents are "free." They are costly in terms of responsibility to your community, to the government, and to other libraries. They are costly in terms of financing their care: checking, binding, storage. (4)

These comments, applicable to a state documents depository, suggest cost considerations that are of concern to a library assessing the cost-effectiveness of its documents collection.

The paucity of studies of the costs associated with the maintenance of a state documents depository serves as a justification for this study. Before proceeding with a description of the cost-generating activities associated with the state documents collections at the study site, it may be useful as background to describe the general provisions of the California documents depository program.

California's Depository Program

Under the provisions of the Library Distribution Act, the California Office of State Printing distributes publications of state agencies cited in the "Basic List of California State Publications" to complete and selective depository libraries.[5] Included in the list are business and profession codes, reports, directories, catalogs, periodicals, and serials. Publications printed by state agencies are distribut-

ed automatically to complete depository libraries and to selective depository libraries only upon request.[6]

Complete and selective depository libraries are required to

> ...provide adequate facilities for the storage and use of the publications deposited with them by the State of California, to render reasonable service without charge to qualified patrons, and to retain all publications received until authorized to dispose of them. (7)

Methods of organization and access to a California documents depository collection are essentially determined by the individual library. Processing suggestions are offered by the State Library; included are suggestions for needed professional and clerical personnel, procedures for check-in, claiming missing publications, alternative cataloging schemes,[8] and physical handling and collection weeding.

The Study Collection

The selective state documents depository at the library at California State University, Northridge is held as a separate collection in the reference room of the Oviatt Library. Additional copies of selected documents, and initial copies of some documents are added to the general collection.[9] Items retained in the separate state documents collection are arranged by State Library call number. Those incorporated into the general collection receive a Library of Congress classification number.

In-house cataloging of monographs and serials (excluding the bills service) is derived from cataloging infor-

mation provided in California State Publications.[10] Author, title, and subject entry cards are arranged in a separate state documents dictionary catalog. Library of Congress copy or original descriptive cataloging is provided for documents selected for inclusion in the library's general collection.

Collection Activities

The acquisition of depository and requested state documents, and the maintenance of that collection generates a variety of activities by selected library staff. One professional librarian is responsible for ordering state publications not received automatically as depository items. He inventories incoming shipments and claims missing numbers. Preparation of main entry cards for the state documents shelflist, and author, title, and subject entries for the state documents public catalog involves verification and occasional modification of entry information provided in California State Publications. The librarian is responsible for selecting those documents that receive full cataloging by the library's cataloging department. Additional duties include the determination of items to be weeded from the state documents collection and bills service, and the maintenance of records of documents received, added, withdrawn, and sent to cataloging.

Three student assistants are responsible for stamping incoming documents, filing documents, filing shelflist and

documents catalog cards, and shelf maintenance. Eight additional student assistants are engaged in monthly shelf reading.

The activities described above result in processing costs which are indicated below. The data upon which these costs are based were obtained from records kept by the state documents librarian, the library's cataloging department, and from discussions with several members of the library's professional staff. Monthly statistics for two calendar years, 1974 and 1975 were examined.

Cost Itemization

I. Personnel Costs

-- Position: Assistant Librarian

Duties: acquisitions inventory; ordering nondepository documents; claims; card preparation; selection of documents for inclusion in general collection; weeding policy determination; maintenance of records.

Time Alloted: approximately 2.75 hours/day (average of 2.5 to 3.0 hours/day).

Cost: 55 hours/working month at $1034.00/month, or 55 hours x $6.46/hour = $355.30/month, or $4263.60/year.

-- Position: Student Assistant

Duties: filing documents

Time Alloted: 10 hours/week

Cost: 40 hours/working month at $2.20/hour = $88.00/month, or $1056.00/year.

-- Position: Student Assistant

Duties: filing documents catalog cards

Time Alloted: 1 hour/week

Cost: 4 hours/working month at $2.55/hour = $ 10.20/ month, or $122.40/year.

-- Position: Student Assistant

Duties: filing (shelving) documents

Time Alloted: 3 hours/week

Cost: 12 hours/working month at $2.20/hour = $26.40/ month, or $316.80/year.

-- Position: Student Assistants (11)

Duties: shelf reading

Time Alloted: 4 hours/working month/student assistant

Cost: 44 hours/working month at $2.20 to $3.10/hour*

* 4 hours at $3.10/hour = $12.40
8 hours at $2.55/hour = 20.40
8 hours at $2.45/hour = 19.60
4 hours at $2.35/hour = 9.40
4 hours at $2.25/hour = 9.00
16 hours at $2.20/hour = 35.20
$106.00/month,

or $1272.00/year

II. Cataloging Costs (preparation of full catalog entries for documents added to general collection).

Documents Cataloged: 1974 125 (estimated)
1975 57

Cost: 1974*

original cataloging or modified L.C. copy,
62.5 documents at $10.00 each = $625.00**

L.C. copy (unmodified),
62.5 documents at $1.50 each = $ 93.75**
$718.75

Cost: 1975

original cataloging or modified L.C. copy,
28.5 documents at $10.00 each = $285.00**

L.C. copy (unmodified),
28.5 documents at $1.50 each = $ 42.75**
$327.75

average yearly cost for 1974-75
period... $523.25

* The number of state documents sent to cataloging during the period January to June, 1974 was not included in the available records. It was necessary to estimate this number by interpolating from the known number of documents sent to cataloging during the comparable period in 1975. The number of documents sent to cataloging each month and method of interpolation used are indicated in Appendix A.

** The average cataloging costs of $10.00/document for original or modified L.C. copy and $1.50 for unmodified L.C. copy were obtained from Ms. Peggy Chiton, Chairperson, Cataloging Department, California State University, Northridge. The fifty percent estimate of the number of documents receiving original or modified L.C. cataloging vs. unmodified L.C. cataloging was obtained from James Burnell, Senior Assistant Librarian, Cataloging Department, California State University, Northridge.

Cost Totals

Personnel Costs	
Assistant Librarian	$4263.60/year
Student Assistant (filing documents)	$1056.00/year
Student Assistant (filing cards)	$ 122.40/year
Student Assistant (shelving)	316.80/year
Student Assistants (shelf reading)	$1272.00/year
	$7030.80/year

Cataloging Costs	
average yearly cost for 1974-75 period	$ 523.25
Total Annual Cost	$7554.05

Additional Costs

Additional costs are incurred in the maintenance of the state documents depository at the library at California State University, Northridge. They are however, difficult to determine. Included are the costs of storage space for documents processed but not added to the collection and the cost of providing necessary shelf space in the reference room where the bulk of the collection is housed. These costs are contingent upon the required materials storage space to floor-shelf area ratio which changes as the library's general collection increases in size. The cost of equipment (carts, files, etc.) and office supplies (paper, pencils, etc.) utilized in the handling and processing of state documents received is equally difficult to assess as much of the equipment and supplies are also utilized for the maintenance of the federal documents depository collection.

Conclusion

In this study, an attempt has been made to estimate the costs resulting from the receipt and maintenance of a California selective state documents depository. Limitations concerning the precision of the calculated costs are evident, (e.g. the need to estimate the number of documents sent to cataloging for a half year period, and the percentage estimate of the number of documents receiving original or modified Library of Congress cataloging as opposed to those for which unmodified Library of Congress copy was utilized). Nevertheless it is thought that the cost calculations obtained were satisfactorily reliable.

The results of this study may be of interest to other libraries, particularly smaller public and junior college libraries considering becoming a selective state documents depository. The appeal of the wealth of "free" and "inexpensive" research material that is received from the depository must be realistically evaluated against the costs that are incurred following its receipt.

It is only from an awareness of the level of information such as that obtained in this cost study that the cost-effectiveness derived from the maintenance of a state documents depository may begin to be evaluated.

NOTES

1. Edith M. Sims, "Selection and Reference Use in the College and University Library," Library Trends, Vol. 15 (1966), p. 113.

2. An exemplary article is that by Peter Hernon, "State Publications /:/ A Bibliographic Guide for Academic (and other) Reference Collections," Library Journal, Vol. 97 (1972), pp. 1393-1398.

3. In Dawn McCaghy and Gary R. Purcell, "Faculty Use of Government Publications," College and Research Libraries, Vol. 33 (1972), p. 7 it is noted that "A search of the literature from 1943 to the present reveals that no study showing use characteristics and needs related to government publications has ever been reported."

4. Elizabeth Rips, "The Reference Use of Government Publications," Drexel Library Quarterly, Vol. 1 (1965), p. 17.

5. Publications printed by the Office of State Printing are made available to other libraries upon request as supplies permit. The "Basic List of California State Publications" may be found in California Library Association Documents Committee, California State Publications; Manual for Acquisition, Processing, Use. (Sacramento: California State Library, 1961), Appendix D, pp. D-1 - D-7.

6. Publications by state agencies are made available to other libraries as supplies permit.

7. California Office of State Printing, California State Publications /:/ Annual Listing Vol. 25, No. 12, December 1971 (Sacramento: California Office of State Printing, 1971), p. iii.

8. Processing suggestions and handling procedures are described in California State Publications; Manual for Acquisition, Processing, Use, (note 5 above).

9. Criteria for inclusion in the general collection are: importance of the document as indicated by its content and scope of subject treatment, its length, and its significance relative to the curriculum; student or faculty interest; request for inclusion by the library or teaching faculty; the desirability of providing a regular circulating copy (items in the state documents collection circulate for three days only).

10. California State Publications is published monthly and cumulated annually by the Office of State Printing. It functions to provide a comprehensive (although not exhaustive) listing of publications issued by state agencies and received by the State Library. The list is arranged alphanumerically by State Library call number.

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APPENDIX A

State Publications Receiving Full Cataloging

1974

January -	June	44	(estimated)*
	July	7	
	August	29	
	September	12	
	October	16	
	November	10	
	December	7	
	Total	125	

1975	January	1
	February	2
	March	7
	April	6
	May	2
	June	2
	July	3
	August	14
	September	8
	October	8
	November	4
	December	0
	Total	57

* The estimated number of state documents that received full cataloging in the January-June, 1974 period was obtained by determining the ratio of January-June/July-December, 1975 documents (.60) and multiplying the July-December, 1974 number of documents by that ratio.

APPENDIX B

State Publications Processed - 1974 and 1975

	1974	1975
Bills	10200	9848
Others*	2767	2089
Documents**	2290	1552
Total Received	15257	13489
Documents Added	1079	834
Bills and Others Added	12967	11937
Total Items Added***	14046	12771
Items Withdrawn****	618	11140

* "Others" include the Assembly Daily Journal, Senate Daily Journal, Assembly Weekly History, Senate Weekly History, etc.

** "Documents" include all items received that are not "bills" or "others."

*** Items received but not added to the collection include duplicate copies (except duplicates added to the general collection), small pamphlets (one or two page items), and items which are included in the collection under commercially published titles (e.g. codes are not added to the general collection since the library holds Deerings).

**** Items withdrawn include bills, documents, and "others."